

LIVE WELL WORK WELL

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 MORETON & COMPANY

Many Secondhand Plastic Toys Could Pose a Risk to Children's Health, Study Suggests

The plastic used in many secondhand toys could pose a risk to children's health because it may not meet the most up to date international safety guidelines, according to new research published in Environmental Science and Technology.

Scientists from the University of Plymouth analyzed 200 used plastic toys which they found in homes, nurseries, and charity shops across the South West of England.

They discovered high concentrations of hazardous elements, including antimony, barium, bromine, cadmium, chromium, lead, and selenium, which are chronically toxic to children at low levels over an extended period of time.

Further tests showed that under simulated stomach conditions (involving extraction in diluted hydrochloric acid) several toys released quantities of bromine, cadmium, or lead that exceeded limits set by the European Council's Toy Safety Directive, with the release of cadmium exceeding its limit value by an order of magnitude in some cases.

The research was led by Dr. Andrew Turner, Associate Professor in Environmental Science, who used x-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry to analyze the presence of elements within individual toys.

He has previously conducted research which showed that decorated drinking glasses can contain harmful levels of lead and cadmium, and that playground paints should be more closely monitored to reduce potential danger to public health.

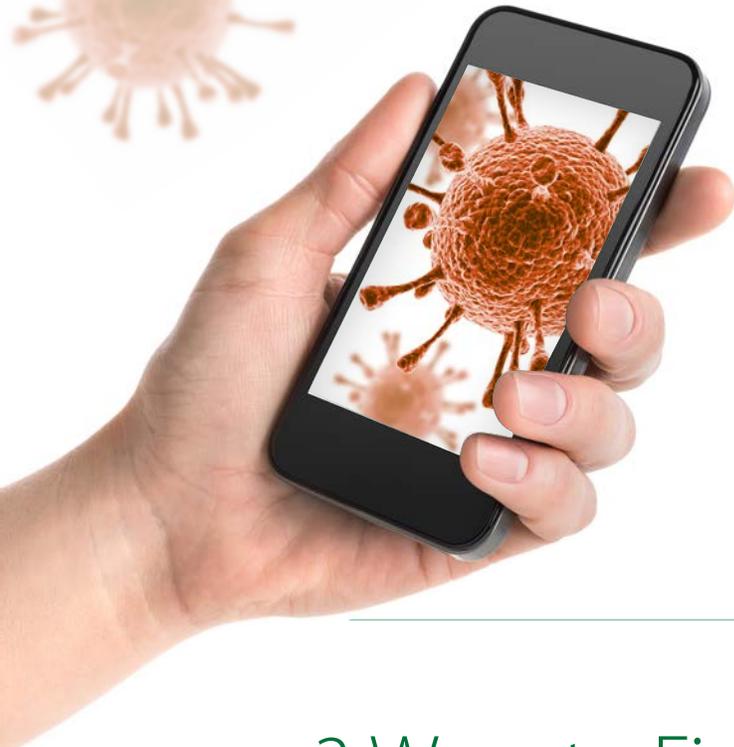
"This is the first systematic investigation of hazardous elements in [secondhand] plastic toys in the UK," Dr. Turner said. "[Secondhand] toys are an attractive option to families because they can be inherited directly from friends or relatives or obtained cheaply and readily from charity stores, flea markets and the internet. But while the Toy Safety Directive applies to new products there is no regulation covering the recycling or re-sale of older toys.

"With the introduction and refinement of the Toy Safety Directive, the plastics industry has had to take steps to eliminate hazardous elements from new toys. However, consumers should be made more aware of the potential risks associated with small, mouthable and brightly [colored] old plastic toys or components. Without that, the attractive cost, convenience and recyclability of previously used toys has the potential to create a legacy of chemical contamination for younger children."



University of Plymouth. "Many second hand plastic toys could pose a risk to children's health, study suggests." ScienceDaily. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/01/180126085435.htm (accessed November 19, 2018).

Cell Phones: The Perfect Vehicle for Carrying Flu Germs



With peak flu season approaching quickly, you know how important it is to constantly wash your hands and disinfect shared spaces, but there's one thing you've probably been neglecting to disinfect: your cellphone.

Researchers from the University of Arizona found that cellphones carried 10 times more bacteria than most toilet seats. What's even more alarming is the fact that cellphones are the perfect vehicle for spreading germs to other people.

That's why it's so important to take the proper steps, like disinfecting your phone daily, using hand sanitizer, and practicing good hygiene habits, to keep your phone germ-free this flu season.

3 Ways to Fight Holiday Stress

Holiday stress plagues many Americans every year. Some holiday stressors include staying on a budget, managing multiple commitments, and finding gifts for all of the people in your life. Use these three tips to help keep holiday stress at bay this year.

- 1. Create your budget now.** If you're stressed about how your holiday spending will impact you after the holidays are over, you're not alone. Remember, the sentiment of a gift is much more important than the cost. Set a realistic budget and do not go over it.
- 2. Shop early.** Sometimes, you can get great deals on presents even before the holiday season hits. Moreover, you can avoid the scenario of not being able to get the gift you want because it's sold out.
- 3. Don't overcommit yourself.** Are you planning on hosting a holiday dinner? Are there any holiday parties you have to attend? Do you have to pick up loved ones from the airport? Making a list of your commitments will help you plan your time and avoid double-booking yourself.



Don't Let Cooler Temperatures Derail Your Workout Plan

If you find it harder to keep up with your workout program as the temperatures drop, you're not alone. Every year, many Americans find it increasingly difficult to remain committed to their plan as the holidays, less-than-ideal weather, and shorter days create obstacles.

Whether you're a gym-goer or outdoor exerciser, there are some simple ways you can overcome the winter obstacles and stay on track with your workout plan.



1. Acclimate to colder weather by warming up inside. If you're an outdoor exerciser, try doing your warmup inside. By doing so, you'll raise your body temperature and already be warm before you step outside.

2. Prep for your next day the night before. If you exercise early in the morning, try getting everything you need for the next day together the night before. This way, all you need to do when your alarm goes off is get up, get dressed, and head out the door.

3. Have a backup plan. Even the most dedicated exercisers will lose their motivation. That's why it's essential to have a backup workout plan that you can do at home. It doesn't have to be lengthy, and doing something is better than doing nothing at all. Aim to have three or four full-body workouts ready for when you need them.

Cornell University. "Education improves decision-making ability, study finds." ScienceDaily. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/10/181005111436.htm (accessed October 11, 2018).

December Recipe Crunchy Potato Casserole

- 2 pounds potatoes (peeled, grated)
- 1 10-ounce can cream of chicken soup
- ¼ cup butter (melted)
- ¾ cup fat-free sour cream
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 1 cup low-fat cheddar cheese (shredded)
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 2 cups corn flakes (crushed)

Heat oven to 350 F. Combine the potatoes, butter, and black pepper in a large bowl. Add onion, soup, sour cream, and cheese. Mix well. Pour mixture into a 13-by-9-inch baking dish and sprinkle with corn flake crumbs. Bake for 45 minutes

Yield: 4 servings. Each serving provides: Calories- 240, Carbs- 35g, Protein- 8g, Fat-7g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Saturated Fat 3g, Sodium 340mg, Total Sugars 4g. Source: USDA



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